

Report on a Survey of North Carolina Abuser Treatment Program Participants:

Impact of Battering on the Workplace

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Report Prepared by:

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Overview: Much of the literature discussing and documenting the costs to businesses that are tied to domestic violence, i.e. reduced productivity and lowered performance, absenteeism and tardiness, and high health care costs, focus on the victim as the harbinger of these costs. Also well documented is how economics plays a key role in a victim's efforts to live a violence free life and ways in which a batterer can interfere or sabotage those efforts to create a higher level of dependence and isolation. In truth, persons who commit domestic violence also produce costs to their employers in some of the same ways, as well as additional ways; most notably using company resources to engage in continuing to threaten or abuse their partners. While it is true that victims struggling with the effects of domestic violence may show deteriorated performance, and utilize a higher level of health care, it is unwise to exclude the costs that the batterer represents to the workplace. By nature, domestic violence is a chronic serial behavior where stalking and harassment are frequent components. Therefore, it is likely that batterers who are employed will not put the behavior "on hold" while they are at work.

The Domestic Violence Commission is part of a state agency that advocates for the well-being of women, and makes recommendations and promotes policies and practices that enhance the state's response to domestic violence. One of its working committees, the Workplace Policy and Awareness Committee, is actively engaged in educating private employers as to effective ways to address domestic violence in the workplace. As part of those efforts, the committee sought to try to document some of the effects on the workplace that are brought by persons who commit domestic violence.

The survey is not empirical. Implications of the findings are suggested, rather than broad conclusions reached.

The survey, developed by committee members and based loosely on a similar survey conducted in Massachusetts, was designed to solicit responses that would provide employers attending the October 30 Don't Let Domestic Violence Hurt Your Business summit with some "food for thought" when designing their own responses for their workplaces.

The survey, found in Attachment 1, was mailed to programs that are approved by the Council for Women & Domestic Violence Commission to provide treatment to domestic violence offenders. The approval for providing this treatment is tied to a number of North Carolina General Statutes [to find out more about these programs and the approval process, go to www.doa.state.nc.us/doa/cfw/cfw.htm]. Programs were asked to administer the survey as part of their intake processes for participants entering their programs during April 2003. Approximately 85% of participants in programs approved by the agency are referred from criminal or civil courts as part of the case disposition. Other participants may enter the program voluntarily through self referral or referrals by other community agencies including the Division of Social Services, mental health agencies, or law enforcement.

188 surveys were returned from 17 programs (surveys were mailed to 67 programs, yielding a 25% response rate). No follow up calls were made to encourage a higher response rate. Because programs vary in size and capacity, a wide number of surveys were submitted by programs ranging from 1 to 45. Names and locations of programs submitting surveys, along with the number of surveys submitted, can be found in Attachment 2.

The committee had limited resources and utilized the time and expertise of a student intern to interpret the findings of the survey. A brochure, highlighting some of the findings and suggesting related implications, was developed for attendees of the October 30th business summit and can be found at www.doa.state.nc.us/dvio.

The following pages of the report summarize the results of each question in the survey.

Data Analysis of the 188 Respondents/Surveys:

Employment:

Question 1) Did you have a paid job during the time you were abusive towards your partner?

81% of respondents indicated that they held a job during the time that s/he was abusive toward his/her partner. 14% responded that they were unemployed and 4% did not respond to this question.

Question 2) What type of work did you or do you do? Please describe your job here or check all the types of jobs that apply:

The majority of respondents who held a job worked in the Labor, Manufacturing, or Service industry. Jobs such as these included sales clerks, office managers, painters, carpenters, truck drivers, housekeepers, welders, soldiers, construction workers, landscapers, etc. This information is important in noting the level of supervision and autonomy an employee has within his/her job.

Question 3) What was or is the salary for this job?

71% of respondents made \$30,000 per year *or less*. 44% made under \$20,000; 20% made \$20,000-\$30,000; 13% made \$30,000-\$40,000; 11% made above \$40,000; and 7% did not respond to this question.

Education:

Question 4) What is your education level?

16% of respondents noted that they had completed less than a High School education; 50% checked "high school/GED" as their education level; 8% checked "Technical/Trade School" as their education level; 20% of respondents checked "College" as their education level; 3% checked "Graduate School"; another 3% checked "other" as their education level; and 1% did not respond to this question.

Job Unemployment Due to Domestic Violence:

Question 5) *As far as you know, were you ever turned down for a job because of your (domestic violence) abusive behavior?*

6%, or 12 respondents, had employers turn them down for a job because of their domestic violence abusive behavior. 5 of the 12 were explicitly due to domestic violence and 3 of the 12 respondents indicated they were turned down for a criminal record. Some of these included criminal arrests, which means it would be easier and/or more likely for an employer to check on this information.

Persons Working with Their Current or Ex-partners:

Question 6) *Have you and your current or ex-partner ever worked for the same employer?*

28% of respondents reported that they had worked for the same employer as their current or ex-partner. (53 of 188 persons)

Information on Domestic Violence:

Question 7) *Have any of your employers ever given you the following information?*

- ☐ *Personnel Policies about domestic violence*
- ☐ *Presentations on domestic violence*
- ☐ *Posted posters, gave out flyers or brochures on domestic violence*

There were 33 reported incidents of respondents having received some form of policy, presentation, poster, and/or flyer concerning domestic violence from their employer(s). 24 people, or 12% of the 188 respondents received some form of domestic violence information from their employer.

Harassment:

Question 8) *How many times have you used any company equipment (telephone, computer, vehicle) to get information about your partner, check up on them, harass them or make threats?*

- ☐ *1-2*
- ☐ *3-4*
- ☐ *5 or more*
- ☐ *Never*

85% reported NEVER having used company equipment to get information about one's partner, check up on him/her, or harass him/her, or make threats. 1% did not respond to this question. This leaves 14% who did use company equipment for the previously mentioned purposes.

Of those 14%: 5% used company equipment one to two times; 4% used company equipment three to four times; and another 5% used company equipment five or more times.

Question 9) While you were working ('on the clock'), have you ever done the following things:

- ☐ *Called your partner after being told not to call*
- ☐ *Called her employer/boss to complain about her*
- ☐ *Go to her place of employment when she did not want you there*
- ☐ *Other _____*
- ☐ *Never have done any of these things.*

In the question, "While you were working 'on the clock', have you ever done the following things," 15% reported having spent company or work time harassing their partners. Of these respondents: 8% reported having called their partners after being told not to call; 2% called their partners' boss to complain about him/her; 3% went to their partners' places of employment when s/he did not want him/her there; and 2% checked the "other" category of this question.

Question 10) Did your employer ever know that you were doing these things while on the job?

- ☐ *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Don't Know*

If you answered yes, what did they do?

- ☐ *did nothing*
- ☐ *referred you to Employee Assistance Program, human resources, or a counselor*
- ☐ *warned you not to keep doing it or you would face discipline*
- ☐ *Other _____*

Of those who reported harassing their partners while on the clock, 32 answered the questions, "Did your employer know that you were doing these things while on the job?" 13% reported that their employers KNEW that they were using company time to behave in this way; 59% said that their employers DID NOT KNOW about their use of company time and equipment to harass their partners; and 28% were UNSURE if their employers were aware of their actions. Of those employers (4) who knew that an employee was using work time to call/harass their partner, 2 called their superior officer, and 2 did nothing, or warned that employee. Of the two who did nothing, one handed out personal policies on domestic violence (Highpoint Group). Those employers who did take some type of action were not reported by respondents as handing out any policies on domestic violence.

Employer Response to Domestic Violence Behavior:

Question 11) Have you ever kept your partner from going to work by keeping them up all night, injuring them, or forcing them to "call in?"

☐ *Yes*

☐ *No*

If you answered yes, to your knowledge, what did your partner's employer do when this was happening?

☐ *Fired or disciplined your partner*

☐ *Helped them*

☐ *Took no action*

☐ *Don't know*

Of the 8 of 188 respondents who had reported keeping their partner(s) from going to work, by keeping them up all night, injuring them, or forcing them to "call in", employers were reported by respondents as having 1 employer who helped the partner, 4 employers took no action, and 3 respondents did not know if the partner's employer responded. Only one respondent reported receiving posters concerning domestic violence from an employer and this was the same respondent who reported that his/her employer took no action.

Protective Order:

Question 12) Did you have a domestic violence protective order against you at the time you were employed, and/or, had you been arrested?

☐ *Yes*

☐ *No*

32% of those surveyed reported having had a domestic violence protective order against them at the time that they were employed, and/or had been arrested. Due to the fact that a domestic violence protective order is a civil, not a criminal offense, employers would have to check the civil record if they wished to fire/not hire a person based on domestic violence behavior.

Other Abusive Behaviors:

Question 13) Have you been in trouble at your workplace for:

☐ *Sexual Harassment* ☐ *Threatening or violent behavior towards others*
☐ *Substance Abuse* ☐ *Other* _____

12 of 169, or 7%, reported having been in trouble in the workplace for other behaviors such as substance abuse, threatening or violent behavior towards others and 'other' behavior. 'Other' behavior included "bad attitude" as listed by the respondent or 'other' behavior, which the respondent did not specify.

Weapon to Work:

Question 14) Have you ever brought a weapon to work?

☐ *Yes*

☐ *No*

If yes, what kind?

☐ *Rifle/Shotgun*

☐ *Knife*

☐ *Hand gun*

☐ *Other*

Data showed that 10 people reported bringing a weapon to work. 4 included handguns and 6 included knives. 1 of the 3 handguns belonged to a person who was self-employed. 3 of the 6 knives belonged to 2 plumbers and 1

painter who indicated that their weapons were used as tools for work purposes. 174 respondents indicated having brought no weapons to work.

Attachment 1:

THE SURVEY

**A SURVEY ABOUT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND
YOUR WORK**

Dear Provider of Abuser Treatment Services:

The North Carolina Council for Women & Domestic Violence Commission is a state agency based in Raleigh that works to reduce domestic violence. One of the Commission's Committees, the Workplace Policy and Awareness Committee, is interested in finding out more from you about how domestic violence affects the workplace. The information we collect will be used to educate employers regarding the effects of battering on the workplace.

We are asking you to include the attached tool as part of your intake process beginning April 1, 2003 through April 30, 2003. You will note from the tool that we are not asking for names on the survey and will only share the findings in an aggregate fashion. Please inform the participants that the information is being collected as part of a research study and their names will in no way be attached to their responses.

Please send us the completed forms for the month of April by May 21th, 2003, to Leslie Starstoneck at the NC Council for Women and Domestic Violence Commission. We have enclosed a pre-addressed folder for your convenience. Please fill out the return address so that we will know to send you the results of the study. We will share a summary of the results with you following our analysis and greatly appreciate your assistance. Please feel free to contact either of us with questions.

Sincerely,

Leslie Starstoneck
Council for Women/Domestic Violence Commission
Department of Administration
(919) 733-2455

Johnny Lee
Workplace Violence Specialist
Office of State Personnel
(919) 733-7934

ASSESSMENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON EMPLOYMENT

1. Did you have a paid job during the time you were abusive towards your partner?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. What type of work did you or do you do? Please describe your job here or check all the types of jobs that apply:

3. What was or is the salary for this job?

☐ under \$20,000

☐ \$20,000-\$30,000

☐ \$30,000-\$40,000

☐ above \$40,000

4. What is your education level?

☐ High School/GED

☐ College

☐ Technical/Trade School

☐ Graduate School

☐ Other _____

5. As far as you know, were you ever turned down for a job because of your (domestic violence) abusive behavior? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered yes, please explain. (for example, was it because of a criminal record or a domestic violence protective order?) _____

6. Have you and your current or ex-partner ever worked for the same employer?

7. Have any of your employers ever given you the following information?

☐ Personnel Policies about domestic violence

☐ Presentations on domestic violence

☐ Posted posters, gave out flyers or brochures on domestic violence

8. How many times have you used any company equipment (telephone, computer, vehicle) to get information about your partner, check up on them, harass them or make threats?

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-4

☐ 5 or more

☐ Never

9. While you were working ('on the clock'), have you ever done the following things:

- ☐ Called your partner after being told not to call
- ☐ Called her employer/boss to complain about her
- ☐ Go to her place of employment when she did not want you there
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Never have done any of these things.

10. Did your employer ever know that you were doing these things while on the job?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

If you answered yes, what did they do?

☐ did nothing

☐ referred you to Employee Assistance Program, human resources, or a counselor

☐ warned you not to keep doing it or you would face discipline

☐ Other _____

11. Have you ever kept your partner from going to work by keeping them up all night, injuring them, or forcing them to "call in?"

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered yes, to your knowledge, what did your partner's employer do when this was happening?

☐ Fired or disciplined your partner

☐ Helped them

☐ Took no action

☐ Don't know

12. Did you have a domestic violence protective order against you at the time you were employed, and/or, had you been arrested?

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Have you been in trouble at your workplace for:

☐ Sexual Harassment

☐ Threatening or violent behavior towards others

☐ Substance Abuse

☐ Other _____

14. Have you ever brought a weapon to work?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind?

☐ Rifle/Shotgun

☐ Knife

☐ Hand gun

☐ Other _____

IMPORTANT – Please read and check this box

- ☐ By checking this box, I am indicating that I understand that these responses will be used for purposes of a research study on domestic violence in the workplace and my name will not be disclosed at any time to the researchers.

Attachment 2:

Programs Responding to the Survey

Analysis of Surveys Answered by Persons in Abuser Treatment Programs

188 Surveys Received from 17 Individual Programs:

CARE Center Family Violence
Program
Cumberland County
Department of Social Services
PO Box 2429
Fayetteville, NC 28302
Surveys: 15

Family Crisis Center
Randolph County
PO Box 2161
Asheboro, NC 27204-2161
Surveys: 2

Blue Ridge Behavior Systems
Union County
4610 Nesbit Rd.
Monroe, NC 28112
Surveys: 3

Asheville Institute, Inc.
Buncombe County
70 Woodfin Place Suite 232
Asheville, NC 28801-2467
Surveys: 2

San Starh Domestic Tranquility
Program for Women
Buncombe County
PO Box 19495
Asheville, NC 28815-1495
Surveys: 9

Roanoke Chowan DV Offender
Program
Bertie County
PO Box 1165
Windsor, NC 27983
Surveys: 9

Family Abuse Crisis Council for
Women
Rowan County
131 West Council Street
Salisbury, NC 28144
Surveys: 11

SAFE, Inc.
Transylvania County
PO Box 2013
Brevard, NC 28712
Surveys: 10

New Beginnings Counseling Center
Jackson County
500 Mill Street
Sylva, NC 28779
Surveys: 2

Family Service, Inc.
Gaston County
214 East Franklin St.
Gastonia, NC 28052
Surveys: 2

(continued)

Family Services of the Lower Cape
Fear
New Hanover County
4014 Shipyard Blvd.
Wilmington, NC 28403
Surveys: 22

ReEntry HALT Program
Johnston County
PO Box 1153
Smithfield, NC 27577
Surveys: 19

Options to DV/SA, Inc.
Beaufort County
PO Box 1387
Washington, NC 27889
Surveys: 15

Family Counseling Services
Durham County
1058 West Club Blvd.
Durham, NC 27701
Surveys: 6

Options, Plus, Inc.
Durham County
301 West Main St., Suite 490
Durham, NC 27701
Surveys: 9

Family Services of the Piedmont-
Sloan Center
Guilford County
1401 Long Street
High Point, NC 27262
Surveys: 45

Unknown
Surveys: 8